

Chapter 9: The Accidental Tourist

THINK ABOUT IT

Question 1:

Bill Bryson says, "I am, in short, easily confused." What examples has he given to justify this?

Answer:

Bill Bryson never had a pleasant journey. He got easily confused. Citing examples, he said that he could not easily find lavatory in a cinema hall and finally found himself standing nearby a self-locking door. At the hotels too, he asked his room number many a time in a day.

Question 2:

What happens when the zip on his carry-on bag gives way?

Answer:

The author got much confused in that condition. When the zip on his carry-on bag gave way, everything within fell on the ground and scattered all over. Newspaper cuttings, loose papers, tobacco packet, magazines, passport, English money and film spread over a large area.

Question 3:

Why is his finger bleeding? What is his wife's reaction?

Answer:

His finger gashed while he tried to pull the zip forcefully and it started bleeding. At this his wife looked at him with an expression of wonder and remarked, "I can't believe you do this for a living".

Question 4:

How does Bill Bryson end up in a "Crash position" in the aircraft?

Answer:

Once while he was travelling in an aeroplane, he leaned over to tie up his shoe laces. As soon as he leaned over for this purpose, someone in the seat ahead of him threw his seat back. Thus, the author ended up in a "crash position".

Question 5:

Why are his teeth and gums navy blue?

Answer:

Strange things used to happen with him. It was his worst experience. He was sucking on the end of his pen while writing important thoughts. He was lost in talking with an attractive lady and could not notice the leakage in the pen. When he visited the lavatory he found his teeth and gums navy blue.

Question 6:

Bill Bryson "ached to be suave". Is he successful in his mission? List his 'unsuave' ways.

Answer:

It is quite clear that Bill Bryson ached to be suave. He is not successful in his mission. He got himself in a car and closed the door without leaving 14 inches of coat outside, wore light-coloured trousers without discovering at the end of the day that he had at various times sat on chewing gum, ice cream, cough syrup and motor oil.

Question 7:

Why do you think Bill Bryson's wife says to the children, "Take the lids off the food for Daddy"?

Answer:

Bill Bryson's wife was aware of the travelling habits of her husband. To avoid any awkward situation, she says, "Take the lids off the food for Daddy" as she did not like her husband to take the lid off the food in his particular style.

Question 8:

What is the significance of the title?

Answer:

The title is quite significant. After going through the whole story it becomes quite vivid that Bill Bryson is The Accidental Tourist. There are various such examples which prove the appropriateness of the title. The title itself suggests about the various strange and accidental experiences of the author.

TALK ABOUT IT

Question 1:

To get confused and behave in 'unsuave' ways like Bill Bryson is normal and human. Tell your class about any similar situation that you found yourself in.

Answer:

On January 1, 2006 I was invited to attend a party in a hotel. I was excited about it. When sitting round the table we were discussing about our past experiences, I got up to attend a telephonic call and moved outside. I was in such a hurry that I did not notice the waiter coming. I hit the tray and all the edibles fell upon the ladies and gentlemen sitting over there. Their clothes went dirty and they became furious. They started criticising me for my carelessness. It was such a scene where I felt embarrassed. I left the party at once.